

# SAVAGE RIVER STATE FOREST ANNUAL WORK PLAN

FISCAL YEAR 2020



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SUSTAINABLE  
FORESTRY  
INITIATIVE

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SFI-00050



Prepared:

Scott Joseph Campbell  
(Forest Manager)

6/12/19  
Date

Reviewed:

[Signature]  
(Regional Forester)

6/12/19  
Date

Approved:

[Signature]  
(Environmental Specialist)

6/28/2019  
Date

**Savage River State Forest**  
**FY-20**  
**Annual Work Plan**



**Savage River State Forest  
FY-20 Annual Work Plan**

<i>Page</i>	<i>Contents</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>I. State Forest Overview</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>II. AWP Summary</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>III. General Location Map for FY-20 Land Management Project Proposals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Map key</li><li>• General location map</li></ul>
<b>6</b>	<b>IV. Special Projects – Forest Resource Management and Planning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Continued Development of Sustainable Forest Mgt. Plan</li><li>B. Forest Stand Delineation, Inventory and Monitoring</li></ul>
<b>7</b>	<b>V. Maintenance and Operations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Maintenance &amp; Management of Roads and Trails</li><li>B. Boundary Line Maintenance</li><li>C. Campground Operation and Maintenance</li><li>D. Rifle Range Maintenance and Management</li></ul>
<b>9</b>	<b>VI. Recreation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Recreational Opportunities on Savage River State Forest</li><li>B. Recreational Proposals</li></ul>
<b>15</b>	<b>VII. Wildlife Habitat Management Projects</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. General Habitat Maintenance</li><li>B. Feed A Bee Forage Grant</li></ul>
<b>17</b>	<b>VIII. Ecosystem Restoration / Protection Projects</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Non-Native Species Control</li><li>B. Wolf Swamp Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Management</li><li>C. Chestnut Orchard Proposal</li></ul>
<b>23</b>	<b>IX. Monitoring and Research</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Monitoring</li></ul>

1. Silvicultural Activities
2. Cassellman River Watershed Brook Trout Monitoring
3. St. Johns Rock ORV Trail Environmental Impact Study

#### B. Research

1. Chestnut Blight Hypovirulence Research (*Cryphonectria parasitica*)
2. Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga Canadensis*) Target Tree Release
3. Genetic Diversity in American Chestnut (*Castanea dentata*)
4. Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) Population Estimate and Structure in Western Maryland

### **43 X. Silvicultural Proposals**

Compartment 1 Stands 19 and 22: *28-acre Conifer Thinning*

Compartment 4 Stands 24-26, 50: *52-acre Hardwood Regeneration*

Compartment 11 Stands 6, 64, 67, 69, 70 and 94: *77-acre Hardwood Thinning*

Compartment 15 Stand 36: *20-acre Hardwood Thinning*

Compartment 17 Stands 33 and 36: *23-acre Hardwood Thinning*

Compartment 29 Stands 14 and 18: *26-acre Conifer Thinning and Patch Hardwood Liberation*

Compartment 77 Stands 12 and 13: *33-acre Hardwood Regeneration*

### **75 XI. Operational Management and Budget Summary**

- A. Introduction
- B. Funding Sources
- C. Operational Cost

### **77 XII. Appendices**

- Appendix 1 - St John's Rock ORV Trail Usage Year 1
- Appendix 2 -Yellow Archangel Management Plan
- Appendix 3 - Japanese Knotweed Management Plan
- Appendix 4 - 10-year Timber Harvest Summary Table
- Appendix 5 - 2018 FSC Audit Action Plan
- Appendix 6 - 2018 SFI Audit Action Plan
- Appendix 7 – Interdisciplinary Team Review and Comments
- Appendix 8 – Citizens Advisory Board Review and Comments
- Appendix 9 – Public Comments

### **93 XIII. Literature Cited**

## **I. State Forest Overview**

Savage River State Forest is approximately 55,155 acres in size and is situated in the northeastern quadrant of Garrett County in Western Maryland. It is a second growth mixed hardwood forest dominated by mixed oak species, sugar and red maple, black cherry, hickory and ash. Owing to high rainfall and certain topographic features, Savage River State Forest contains many excellent quality growing sites stocked with superior quality trees. The forest contains approximately 2,800 acres of conifer plantations that were established in the 1940's following state acquisition. Red pine is the dominant tree species within these plantations but other conifers include white pine, Norway spruce, larch, and Scotch pine. These plantations were established as nurse crops to rehabilitate abandoned and depleted farm fields, with the long-term goal of conversion back to native hardwoods as appropriate.

Savage River State Forest has been intensively managed over the past nine decades. Forest harvest and grooming operations are undertaken to thin overstocked stands, to effectively deal with public safety concerns, to harvest mature or diseased/dying trees, to improve habitat for certain wildlife species, to assist and provide for certain research needs, to address aesthetic concerns and to increase the proportion of age/height diversity of forested stands.

## **II. Annual Work Plan Summary**

The FY-2020 Annual Work Plan for Savage River State Forest was formulated in 2018. It contains projects to be undertaken in the areas of Special Projects, Maintenance and Operations, Recreation, Watershed Protection, Ecosystem Restoration / Protection, and Wildlife Management. In addition to the routine operations and management of the State Forest, the FY-20 Annual Work Plan for Savage River State Forest details seven land management projects that will be the focus of the State Forest management staff for FY-20. All projects and proposals within this Plan have been developed to meet one or more of the Land Management Guidelines and Objectives outlined in the Savage River State Forest Sustainable Management Plan including:

***Forest Economy:*** management activities intended to maintain an economically sustainable forest and contribute to the local economy through providing forest-related employment and products.

***Forest Conservation:*** management activities with a purpose to protect significant or unique natural communities and elements of biological diversity, including Ecologically Significant Areas, High Conservation Value Forests and old growth Forests. Old growth forest management serves to restore and/or enhance old growth forest structure and function.

***Water Quality:*** management activities designed to protect or improve ecological functions in protecting or enhancing water quality.

***Wildlife Habitat:*** management activities with a purpose to maintain and enhance the ecological needs of the diversity of wildlife species and habitat types.

***Recreation and Cultural Heritage:*** *management activities with a purpose to maintain and enhance areas that serve as visual, public camping, designated trails, and other high public use areas.*

**A. Special Management Projects Include:**

**1. Continued Development of the Certified, State Forest Sustainable Forest Management Plan** - with special focus on addressing items identified as in need of improvement as a result of the 2018 FSC/SFI Certification Audits.

**2. Forest Stand Delineation, Inventory and Monitoring** – Completion of the project to re-inventory and redefine stands on the entire forest. This critical project will continue in FY-20. To date, 100% of the data collection in harvestable stands is completed. Areas of HCVF including wildlands, ecologically significant areas, old growth, old growth ecosystem management areas and areas that preclude timber harvest operations will be inventoried secondarily to the harvestable areas. The project will allow a thorough analysis of this complete data set from which further management plans will be derived. Inventory work will continue in the form of follow-up monitoring protocols associated with the initial inventory and certification requirements.

**3. Non-Native Invasive Species (NNIS) Inventory and Control Work** - The Sustainable Forest Management Plan calls for various responses to NNIS and the Forest Inventory Project has allowed for a broad view of the problem forest wide.

**B. Land Management Projects Include:**

**1.** Continuation of the ecosystem restoration project involving control of invasive and exotic plants forest wide.

**2.** Continuation of the ecosystem restoration efforts involving control of invasive, exotic forest pests, particularly the Hemlock wooly adelgid.

**3.** 7 Silvicultural projects including:

5 Intermediate Harvests on 174 acres and 2 Regeneration Harvests on 86 acres.

**4.** Establishment of an American Chestnut nursery to allow for the continued efforts to develop a permanent solution to the chestnut blight issue and restore the species as a major component of the forest landscape.

Forest harvest operations are undertaken to utilize mature and dead/dying/diseased trees; to thin overstocked stands; to improve and diversify wildlife habitat; to effectively correct public safety concerns and issues; to reduce the forests vulnerability to insect attack, disease or wildfire hazard; to facilitate certain approved research needs; to improve certain aesthetic aspects of an area; and to improve the proportions of age class and species diversity within stands and management blocks. This forest has been intensively managed since its inception, utilizing both even and uneven-aged techniques via selective removals and regeneration harvests. Early records

indicate that as cut over land was acquired, foresters culled the forest, removing the poorly formed and damaged timber left behind in the wake of the cut and run practices employed by early timber speculators. By removing these undesirable trees, newly forming seedlings were released from competition and were thus cultured into the future growing stock of trees that we enjoy today. The benefits of this work have been significant including improved wildlife habitat diversity, improved forest health and more abundant mast production, improved utilization of gypsy moth damaged trees, reduced forest fire hazard, and the considerable financial contribution of management to the state and local economies as well as to those employed in the forest products industry.

The FY-20 Annual Work Plan outlines eight harvests on 260 acres, producing a harvest of approximately 1,200,000 board feet of sawtimber and accounting for an estimated \$260,000 worth of raw wood products entering local markets. Much of the silvicultural work laid out in this work plan is focused on initiating seedling development to better ensure regeneration successes in future harvests. Much of the value of the harvests in the work plan will be directed back into the forest providing the essential investment in pre-harvest cultural work that will safeguard the long term sustainable management of these important forest resources. The cultural operations and management projects outlined within the FY-20 Annual Work Plan are selected to provide significant contributions to the sustainability of forest resources found within the State Forest and the ecosystems associated with it.

### **III. General Location Map for FY-20 Land Management Project Proposals**

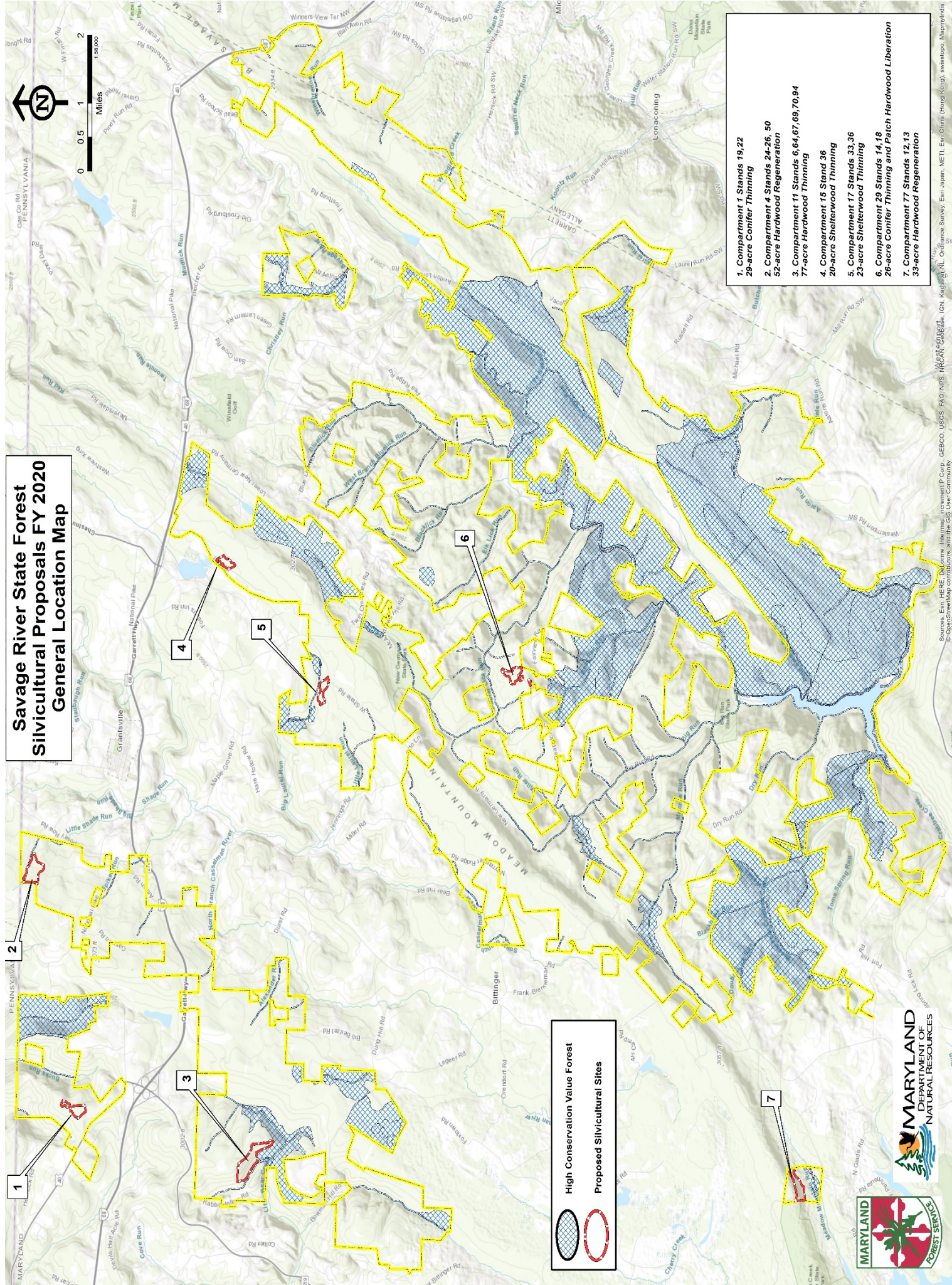
**Approximately 260 Acres**

#### **Map Key**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <i>1. Compartment 1 Stands 19, 22</i>             | <i>29-acre Conifer Thinning</i>                         |
| <i>2. Compartment 4 Stands 24-26, 50</i>          | <i>52-acre Hardwood Thinning</i>                        |
| <i>3. Compartment 11 Stands 6, 64, 69, 70, 94</i> | <i>77-acre Hardwood Thinning</i>                        |
| <i>4. Compartment 15 Stand 36</i>                 | <i>20-acre Hardwood Thinning</i>                        |
| <i>5. Compartment 17 Stands 33, 36</i>            | <i>23-acre Hardwood Thinning</i>                        |
| <i>6. Compartment 29 Stands 14, 18</i>            | <i>26-acre Conifer Thinning and Hardwood Liberation</i> |
| <i>7. Compartment 77 Stands 12, 13</i>            | <i>33-acre Hardwood Regeneration</i>                    |



**Savage River State Forest  
Silvicultural Proposals FY 2020  
General Location Map**



1. **Compartment 1 Stands 29, 22**  
**29-acre Conifer Thinning**
2. **Compartment 4 Stands 24, 26, 50**  
**52-acre Hardwood Regeneration**
3. **Compartment 11 Stands 6, 64, 67, 69, 70, 94**  
**77-acre Hardwood Thinning**
4. **Compartment 15 Stand 36**  
**20-acre Shelterwood Thinning**
5. **Compartment 17 Stands 33, 36**  
**23-acre Shelterwood Thinning**
6. **Compartment 29 Stands 14, 18**  
**26-acre Conifer Thinning and Patch Hardwood Liberation**
7. **Compartment 77 Stands 12, 13**  
**33-acre Hardwood Regeneration**





## **IV. Special Projects - Forest Resource Management and Planning**

### **A. Continued Development of the Certified State Forest Sustainable Forest Management Plan.**

Beginning in 2011, the Forest Service began revising the long term sustainable management plans for all three of the State Forests in the Western Region. The initial framework follows the sustainable management plan format established for the State of Maryland's Chesapeake Forest on the Eastern shore. The Department's goal is to have the updated sustainable forest management plans receive dual third party certification under both the Forest Stewardship Councils (FSC) and Sustainable Forestry Initiatives (SFI) standards and guidelines.

Throughout the course of the last seven years, broad resource assessments have been carried out identifying the various management units and features located on the forests including identification and mapping of High Conservation Value Forest Areas (HCVF), much of which was formerly identified as the State Forests "Special Management Zone". Within the HCVF are located a broad range of Ecologically Significant Areas (ESA). These areas typically contain rare, threatened or endangered species and their critical habitats. By spring of 2011 initial drafts of the Forest's Sustainable Management Plan were developed and shared with stakeholders for initial comment and review. The plans were submitted to both the FSC and SFI organizations in the spring of 2011, at which point audits have been completed on all three of the western state forests. Following the audits, draft plans and audit findings were presented to the State Forests Citizen Advisory Committees for review and comments. The Draft Sustainable Management Plans were made available for public comment fall of 2011. Revisions and updates to the Sustainable Management Plan are currently underway and are scheduled to be completed by April of 2019.

Each year the State Forests Management Program is audited for compliance to the standards set forth by the Certifying Organizations. Any shortcomings in the programs identified during the audits are identified in a Corrective Action Reports (CARs) and/or observations identified as being in need of improvement in order to be "certified" as sustainably managed forest lands under the internationally recognized FSC and SFI standards. These corrective actions vary from simple formal documentation of routine practices, to more complex policy and procedure development involving various stakeholders and partners. The program requires that all of these items be addressed before the next annual audit, with some needing more immediate attention. A minor corrective action request was issued by FSC in regard to appropriate trademark use as well as an observation related to incidental information within the work plans that was outdated. Both issues were easily corrected to the satisfaction of the auditing body. SFI identified three Opportunities for Improvement regarding annual work plan activities and their status, trademark usage and overall climate change awareness as it relates to impacts on the forest landscape and its subsequent management (See Appendix 1 for brief summary of audit findings). State Forest staff time and field operations are adjusted and redirected to assist in addressing any Corrective Action items in the course of the next year.

## **B. Forest Stand Delineation, Inventory and Monitoring**

A critical part of developing long term sustainable management plans is the availability of up-to-date forest inventory data. Initial stand data collection has been completed on the harvestable areas of the forest using the SILVAH Inventory System developed by the US Forest Service which incorporates intense surveys of both the overstory and understory to assist in the formulation of appropriate silvicultural prescriptions in specific forest types. The demand for this important data set is increasingly evident as special projects evolving out of demands placed by Forest Certification Standards utilize this data set for project planning including the Annual Work Plan and the Non-Native Invasive Species Inventory.

What had historically been carried out on a 10-year interval offering a snap shot in time view of the forest, has evolved into an annual sampling approach that gives a more frequent look at overall forest condition throughout the years. This approach will allow a much closer watch on developing forest conditions and allows for more rapid and timely responses. This approach is especially valuable in light of the numerous and frequent introductions of foreign insects, diseases, and invasive plants that can rapidly disrupt forest systems. The initial Stand Delineation and Inventory Project will be continued as a Forest Monitoring program as required under certification in order to allow for documented observations of changing conditions throughout the forest. Program focus will include: monitoring of developing regeneration sites allowing for the timely response to the investment in intensive silvicultural work such as herbicide control of invasive and interfering plants and prescribed fire; NNIS monitoring and control work; silvicultural results with respect to management objectives and outcomes and recreation/visitor impacts, etc.

## **V. Maintenance and Operations**

Aside from the detailed cultural work planned for the State Forests, the following is a partial list of projects that are often on-going from year to year and are an integral part of State Forest operations: Routine maintenance projects include building repair and maintenance, vehicle maintenance, mowing at the office facility, snow removal, repair and replacement of fire rings and tables at the camp sites, brush hogging trails, and repair of road surfaces.

### **A. Maintenance and Management of Roads and Trails**

There are approximately 107 miles of trail and hardened road surface on the forest and approximately 1/3 of the mileage is maintained each year. Maintenance in these areas includes brush hogging, mowing, and rehabilitation of road surfaces. Herbicide usage has been integrated into the road maintenance regime in order to control growth in areas where mechanical control methods are not feasible (i.e. steep slopes, narrow paths, rocky areas). The use of herbicide along forest roadways can also reduce operational costs for the maintenance staff by controlling unwanted vegetation along these travel corridors for several years, when applied properly.

### **B. Boundary Line Maintenance**

Savage River State Forest currently has 336 miles of boundary line, including interior lines, exterior lines and road frontage. Boundary maintenance is critical to the management of all

public lands. In order to keep up with this effort, State Forest staff maintain approximately 60 miles of line each year. In addition to routine marking and painting, considerable effort is spent on researching, relocating, or establishing missing and/or new line, as well as addressing boundary conflicts. As conflicts arise, every effort is made to resolve the issue in a timely and professional manner. Often, this work leads to the need for a licensed surveyor and legal recourse in order to resolve the issue. With the assistance of Land Planning and Acquisition staff, a minimum of five miles of previously unpainted and/or missing boundary line are to be reestablished until the entire forest boundary is demarcated.

### C. Campground Operation and Maintenance

There are 71 primitive camp sites that are maintained on a regular schedule throughout the year. Major campsite maintenance coincides with major holidays, the end of winter and at the traditional end of the camping in late summer/early fall. The campsites are also frequented during the white-tailed deer firearms seasons in the fall and winter, during spring turkey season in early spring and during the opening weekend of trout season in late winter/early spring. Maintenance and operation of these primitive campsites includes: managing group site reservations; maintenance of information / bulletin boards; camper contacts to insure policies are understood; self-registration fee collections and deposits; weekly site inspection and cleaning; hazardous tree evaluation and removals; grass mowing (typically the week before the summer holidays and otherwise as needed); maintenance and replacement of picnic tables, lantern posts, and fire rings; and site impact monitoring.

### D. Rifle Range Maintenance and Management

There is a 100-yard shooting range on the forest that is open to the public year round located at 3250 New Germany Road. Maintenance is ongoing and includes replacing backstops as well as the backstop stands, trash clean-up, mowing and weed eating around the facility, plowing the entrance road, restocking range permits, collecting range fees and posting range closures when necessary. Prior to and during the various hunting seasons, range use increases appreciably resulting in more frequent maintenance visits. Typically, at the conclusion of spring turkey season, the backstops and stands from the previous year are replaced, depending on the severity of damage.

The shooting range is open daily from 8 a.m. to dusk and offers hunters an ideal location to sight in weapons. The range features ten stations with distances ranging from 25 to 100 yards. Hunters can pay the \$5.00 daily fee at the range using envelopes provided. The annual pass costing \$25 and the family pass costing \$50 are available at the Forest Headquarters Office. Rules and regulations are posted at the range, with the only restrictions being no fully automatic weapons and no clay pigeons.

## **VI. Recreation**

### **A. Recreation Opportunities (See Figure 2 p. 12)**

#### **1. Hiking, Biking and Horseback Riding Trails**

Savage River State Forest has over 70 miles of trails open to hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders of any ability. Not all trails are open to all recreational pursuits and it is recommended that before engaging in any activities visit or contact the state forest headquarters to become aware of any trail restrictions. A backpacking permit must be obtained at the forest headquarters or at any of the self-registration areas. Trail guides featuring a topographic map and trail descriptions can be purchased at the forest headquarters.

#### **2. Off Road Vehicles**

Snowmobile and off-road vehicle operators can enjoy many miles of scenic trail along the Meadow Mountain Trail, East Shale Road, Margraff Plantation, Negro Mountain Trail and the newly constructed St. John's Rock ORV Trail. Unlike the aforementioned trails, the St. John's Rock ORV Trail is the first trail on Department lands ever designed specifically for ORV enthusiasts. Features include a multi-site primitive campground designed to support ORV riders, children's riding trails within the campground, technical spur loops and hare scramble style trail sections for all terrain vehicles and motorcycles, a full-size rock crawl area for jeeps and four-wheel drive vehicles and miles of forest access roads for all purpose riding opportunities. The total trail system is approximately 13 miles in length with varying challenges for riders of all skill levels. The trail officially opened to the public on July 23, 2017. Usage statistics for the inaugural year can be found in Appendix 1.

Be sure to display a current Department of Natural Resources ORV permit, available at the forest headquarters or online at [www.dnr.maryland.gov](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov).

#### **3. Hunting**

Hunting is permitted throughout the forest except where posted with safety zone signs. The 55,000 acres of Savage River State Forest includes two state park areas (New Germany and Big Run) where hunting is prohibited. The forest boundaries are marked with yellow paint on trees - a yellow bar as you enter the forest and a yellow dot as you exit the forest. Hunting on or crossing private land within or near the State Forest requires the written permission of the land owner. Parking is permitted along roadways as long as traffic is not blocked. Hunters must have a valid Maryland Hunting License and should refer to the current Hunting & Trapping guide for season dates and specific regulations.

Several access roads are opened every fall to accommodate hunters. These gated roads are opened prior to squirrel season in September and remain open through January 31. A copy of the road-opening schedule is available in the Forest Headquarters Office. Opened roads can be used by all hunters and allow for vehicular traffic. Due to the nature of these roads, the use of four-wheel drive is recommended. Handicapped hunter access roads are also available. More details about handicapped accessibility appear in this brochure and on the current road-opening schedule.

\*Hunter Safety Classes, required for the purchase of a license, are taught periodically through the Department of Natural Resources. These classes are usually offered in the county at one of the local State Parks.

#### 4. Trapping

Trapping is permitted both on land and in the water. A permit can be issued for trapping on Savage River State Forest at the Regional DNR Wildlife Office in Flintstone. Trappers are required to obtain a certificate of trapper education from the Department of Natural Resources. Trapper education courses are held statewide. Refer to the current Hunting & Trapping Guide for complete regulations. A valid hunting license is required when applying for a trapping permit.

#### 5. Fishing

Anglers with a Freshwater Fishing License have the opportunity to catch multiple species of fish in the Savage River Reservoir including walleye, large-mouth bass, smallmouth bass, yellow perch, bluegill and several trout species. Anglers with a trout stamp can fish the Savage River for wild brook trout and stocked brown and rainbow trout. Tributaries of the Savage River, including Middle Fork, Poplar Lick and Blue Lick to name a few, provide a unique backcountry fishing experience for native brook trout that is unsurpassed in the region. The majority of the Savage River watershed is within the Zero Creel Limit Area for brook trout and can only be fished with artificial flies and lures. For regulations, creel limits and special management areas consult the Maryland Freshwater Sportfishing Guide or contact the Western Maryland Fisheries Office at (301) 334-8218.

#### 6. Boating/Paddling

The Savage River Reservoir provides excellent boating and paddling opportunities. Three public boat launches offer convenient access at Dry Run Road, Big Run State Park and ¼ mile north of the dam breast on Savage River Road. Gasoline engines are prohibited on the reservoir. Recreational whitewater releases occur periodically throughout the year on Savage River below the dam that are sponsored and coordinated by the Upper Potomac River Commission, Savage River State Forest, Garrett College Adventuresports Institute, Verso-Luke Mill and several commercial boating outfitters. The events are at no cost to the participants, but donations are accepted to cover the cost of shuttle services and on site restroom facilities.

#### 7. Winter Recreation

Cross-country skiers and snowshoers of all abilities can enjoy a winter wonderland on the New Germany and Mount Aetna trails. The Asa Durst Trails are recommended for a backcountry snowshoe experience. Snowshoers must be careful to walk beside and not on cross-country tracks as it disrupts them.

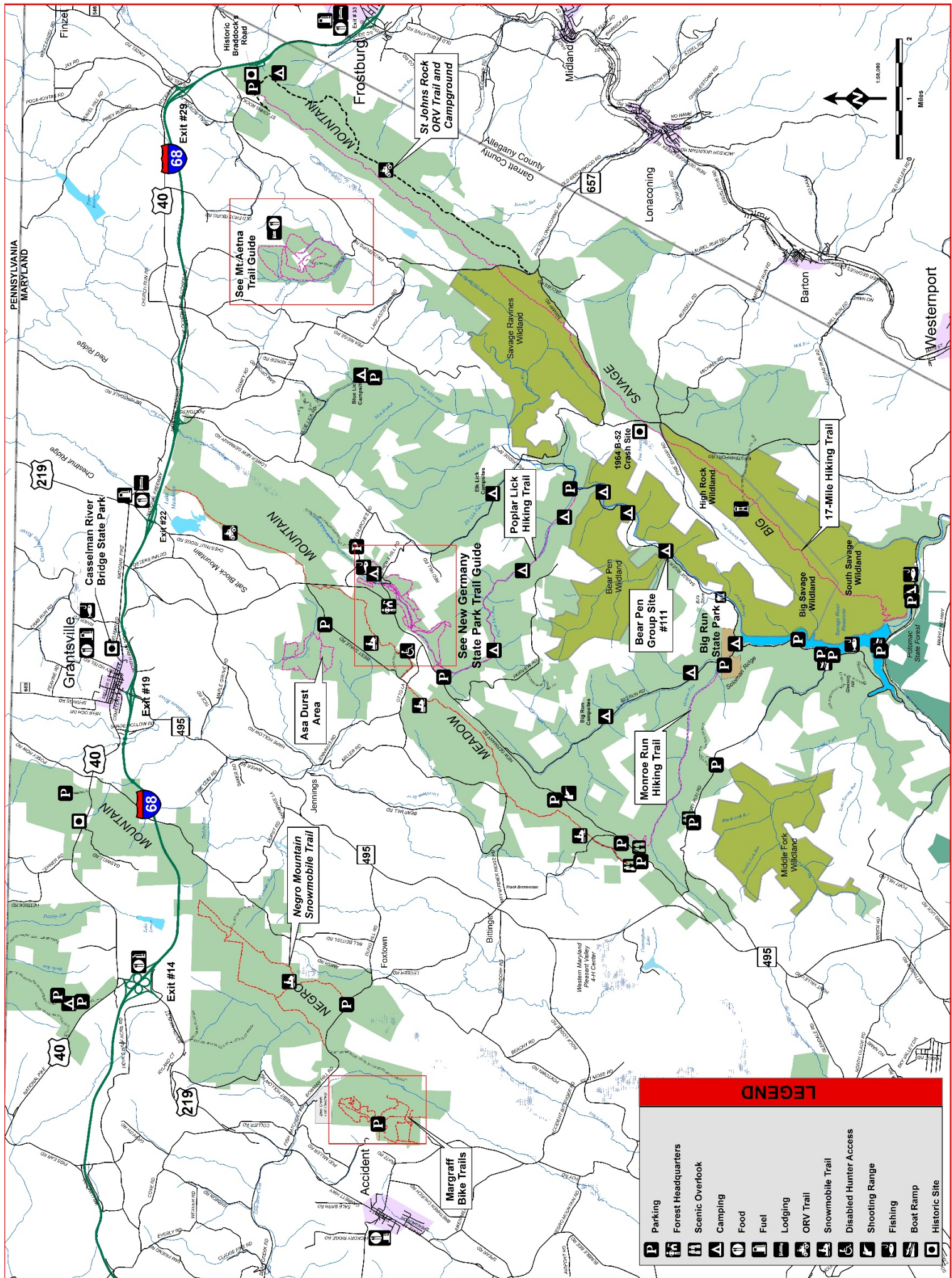
#### 8. Geocaching

Currently, 28 goecaches are located throughout Savage River State Forest for those interested in testing their navigational and tracking skills. All geocaches must reviewed and approved by the staff before being placed anywhere on the forest. Applications and general rules for geocache placement are available at the state forest headquarters.

#### 9. Maps

Brochures and maps are available at the Savage River State Forest Headquarters Office located at 127 Headquarters Lane, Grantsville, Maryland 21536.





**LEGEND**

	Parking
	Forest Headquarters
	Scenic Overlook
	Camping
	Food
	Fuel
	Lodging
	ORV Trail
	Snowmobile Trail
	Disabled Hunter Access
	Shooting Range
	Fishing
	Boat Ramp
	Historic Site



## **B. Recreation Proposals**

National Recreation Trails Grant Requests: To Enhance Recreation and Trails Opportunities for Visitors of Public Land.

Savage River State Forest has submitted one National Recreation Trails Grant Request to fund enhancements to various recreation trails on the forest:

1. St. John Rock Road, ORV Trail Maintenance – \$37,500

This project will provide seasonal maintenance personnel (2) to maintain the newly developed 13-mile long St. John Rock Road and Red Dog Road ORV Trail. Hiring these seasonal employees will benefit trail users by maintaining the surface of the trail and providing a safety backup on weekends. Operating the ORV trail will require regular maintenance and upkeep. The grant will fund five elements of trail upkeep including:

- 1) Maintenance of water control devices.
- 2) Monitoring use and providing public outreach.
- 3) Clean up of litter and debris.
- 4) Providing protection to environmentally sensitive areas adjacent to the trail
- 5) Maintaining closure of existing illegal trails and deterring new trails from being developed.